

Testimony before the Appropriations Committee
March 9, 2023
H.B. No. 6659 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE
BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2025

Good evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Kevin Vary and I am a registered voter in Norwich.

I am here to offer testimony regarding H.B. No. 6659 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2025

I am here to support an increased budget for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. I am one of the many faces of mental health and addiction in Connecticut as I have struggled with both my whole life. I am also here to express my strong support for non-profit organizations, such as Reliance Health. These organizations give me and those like me the choices for programs and services that are very important to my life and my recovery.

I am 62 years old and I have been a member of Reliance Health since 1983. After I graduated high school, I began working as a bus boy cleaning tables and then worked as a custodian at a church and then at a school. I worked for six years full-time at this job but had to leave because of my mental health condition and substance abuse issues. I have tried other jobs since then but have had to leave them all for the same reasons. I would like to work part-time at this stage of my life but I also know arthritis in my knee would make it difficult to work. Over the years, I have been given a lot of help by Reliance Health to get back on my feet and be a productive member of society. Today, because of the help I have received through these programs, I live on my own and am I have been sober for over 24 years.

I am not sure what my life would look like without the services provided at Reliance Health and Penobscot Place, and I am not sure where I would be. I will tell you that it would definitely not be better.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak and share my experience with you.